

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR THE CONSTRUCTION AND  
OPERATIONS OF AN ELECTRONIC COMBAT TRAINING FACILITY AT OUTLYING  
FIELD COUPEVILLE, NAVAL AIR STATION WHIDBEY ISLAND, ISLAND  
COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Pursuant to Council on Environmental Quality Regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) implementing procedural provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act, the Department of the Navy gives notice that an Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared and an Environmental Impact Statement is not required for the construction and operation of an electronic combat training (ECT) facility at Outlying Field (OLF) Coupeville, Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island (NASWI), Island County, Washington.

The proposed action is to construct and operate an ECT facility capable of providing needed electronic combat training in established Military Operation Areas for aircrews stationed at NASWI. The proposed ECT facility would be located in the southwestern portion of OLF Coupeville and would consist of a radome resting on top of a single-story, 50-foot square building. The radome would house an electronic device called "ground threat signal generator" or Device AN/FSQ-T22. The total height of the structure would be about 45 feet above ground level. The proposed facility would also have an aircraft beacon, a parking area, and a security zone within a chain link fence. The proposed action is needed to complement the existing ECT facility at Seaplane Base, NASWI in supporting current and follow-on EA-6B hardware/software improvements and maximizing in-flight aircrew training in the Pacific Northwest.

Thirteen other Navy properties larger than 2 to 5 acres in size, primarily in the Puget Sound area, were considered for alternative sites. These sites were evaluated and subsequently eliminated because they cannot meet siting criteria: (1) Line of Sight and Terrain Considerations, (2) Loiter Airspace Requirements, (3) Distance From the AN/FSQ-T22 Device to the Military Operating Area and Airspace, (4) Signal Direction of Arrival Separation, (5) Navy Construction Site Availability, and (6) Site Operation Coordination and Mission Interface. The "no

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action" alternative would not construct an additional ECT facility for use in training Navy combat aircrews in the Pacific Northwest. This alternative was eliminated because it does not allow the Navy to meet its aircrew training requirements, and would ultimately result in a potential loss of combat readiness.

The proposed site for the ECT facility is in central Whidbey Island about 2.5 miles southeast of the Town of Coupeville, Washington. The proposed action would convert approximately 2.8 acres of agricultural land for the development of the ECT facility, access driveway and parking lot, evergreen tree buffer zone, and security area surrounding the facility. This conversion would represent a loss of less than one half of one percent of the total existing agricultural land available at OLF Coupeville. The proposed action would not result in significant impacts to the environment. The proposed site is located outside: (1) the 750-foot setback from the airfield runway and (2) the two clear zones beyond each end of the runway which are subject to Navy regulations regarding Air Installation Compatible Use Zones. The proposed action is compatible with the NASWI Master Plan for OLF Coupeville general development as a training facility.

The proposed site is located within an existing agricultural field that has been surveyed with no archeological resources identified. The proposed site is approximately 300 feet outside of and east of the boundary of the Central Whidbey Island Historical District (CWIHD) and Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve (ELNHR). The Navy has coordinated with the Washington State Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation (OAHP) and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) for review following the guideline of 36 CFR 800.5(b). The OAHP and ACHP have both concurred that the proposed project would have "no adverse effect" on the adjacent ELNHR.

The proposed ECT facility would house an electronic device, Device AN/FSQ-T22, which is not a radar device. The Device AN/FSQ-T22 has been in use by the U.S. Air Force at Cannon AFB since 1991. NASWI has been operating an ECT facility at Seaplane Base since 1983. This existing ECT facility operates within the same emission characteristics as the proposed ECT facility. The operating records maintained by NASWI indicated that there have been no complaints regarding the existing ECT facility. There have been no reported Electromagnetic Interference impacts to communication facilities or electronic equipment operated in the

surrounding communities. The separation distance between the existing ECT facility at Seaplane Base and the proposed site is approximately 6 miles. The proposed ECT facility would be designed, constructed, and operated to limit main beam exposure to designated azimuths, attitudes, and degrees only. Equipment lockouts would preclude the main beam from ever being pointed toward the ground, people, structures, or roads. Therefore, there is no cumulative effects from the existing and proposed ECT facilities.

The proposed site is approximately 1.1 miles from the ordinary high water mark and would not affect water quality. Therefore, the State of Washington does not require a Coastal Zone Management Plan consistency determination.

The project area is within the Island County area of the Northwest Air Pollution Authority and is currently designated as "attainment" for all criteria air pollutants. Construction activities associated with the proposed project would generate locally elevated levels of pollutants, primarily suspended particulate matter, due to operation of heavy-duty construction equipment, fill/haul truck trips and construction worker commute trips. These impacts are localized, temporary, and will be mitigated by applying dust control measures. Air emissions from the new ECT facility are determined to be small and would not interfere with the State Implementation Plan's purpose to eliminate or reduce the number and severity of violations of the national ambient air quality standards.

No significant hazardous materials/waste management impacts will occur from the proposed action. No impacts to either water resources or geology/soils resources will occur. The State Department of Natural Resources has concurred that no rare plants, high quality native wetlands or native plant communities in the vicinity of the project site. There will not be any disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects from the action on minority and low-income populations.

Based on information gathered during preparation of the EA, the Navy finds that the construction and operation of an additional electronic combat training facility at OLF Coupeville, Naval Air Station, Whidbey Island, Island County, Washington will not significantly impact the environment.

The EA addressing this action may be obtained from: Commanding Officer, Engineering Field Activity Northwest, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 19917 7th Avenue N.E., Poulsbo, Washington 98370-7570 (Attention: (b) (6) Code 232KK); telephone (360) (b) (6). Copies of the EA may also be reviewed at the Oak Harbor City Library , Oak Harbor, Washington, and the Sno-Isle Regional Library in the Town of Coupeville, Washington.

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Date

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